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February 9, 2010

Dear Friend:

As governors who are proud to have Toyota operations in our states, we can testify to the exemplary citizenship of one of the most admired companies in our nation.

Toyota has become as thoroughly an American company as the so-called “domestic” manufacturers – and the facts back this up. The Cars.com American-Made Index of 2009 named the Toyota Camry as the Top American-Made Car, a factor based on sales, where the car’s parts are made and whether the car was assembled in the United States. In total, four Toyota models made the top ten list. In addition, four Toyota models made their 2009 list of top ten U.S.-built cars with the highest domestic-parts content.

Toyota has more than 172,000 company and dealership employees across the United States, not including suppliers, and we have seen the magnitude of benefits created by their presence. Besides the obvious good-paying jobs provided in our states, Toyota demonstrates a commendable positive spirit not only with its own employees, but also in the communities and neighborhoods within which its plants operate.

This exemplary behavior is reflected in the company’s handling of recent safety concerns on certain Toyota models. No other automobile manufacturing business in our memory has addressed safety issues in such an emphatic manner by not only recalling vehicles, but also voluntarily stopping production and sales of those vehicles until safety issues were addressed. Toyota has unquestionably placed the safety of its customers above its profits. At the same time, the company has not laid off a single employee, despite the impact these concerns have had on sales. All of these actions are representative of the valuable friend we have in Toyota.

It is unfortunate and unfair that Toyota has fallen victim to aggressive and questionable news coverage of these issues when the real story is how quickly Toyota identified the problems, found solutions, and delivered those solutions to its dealers worldwide; many Toyota dealers are working around the clock to fix the problems.

Despite the federal government’s obvious conflict of interest because of its huge financial stake in some of Toyota’s competitors (indeed the federal government is a shareholder in many of Toyota’s competitors), it has spoken out against Toyota, including statements U.S. government officials have later been forced to retract.

These disturbing statements and hasty actions stand in marked contrast to their reaction to the astonishing 16.4 million recalls in the auto industry for 2009, as reported in the Detroit News – many as serious as or more serious than the concerns Toyota is currently addressing. In fact, since the inception of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act in 1966, more than 390 million cars, trucks, buses, recreational vehicles, motorcycles, and mopeds have been recalled to

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correct safety issues. Among major automakers, only one reported a decline in vehicles recalled in 2009 over the previous year.

As you undertake this issue before your committees, we hope you will consider Toyota's long history as a steward of safety and quality, as a valued employer across our nation, and of the need for a responsible and fair response from the federal government. It is in all of the nation's interest for Toyota to be a continued success.

Sincerely,

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